

25 November 2009

Department of the Senate  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600  
Australia

## **SENATE INQUIRY INTO MATTERS RELATING TO THE TORRES STRAIT**

The AFP has considered the Terms of Reference for the Senate Inquiry into Matters Relating to the Torres Strait and provides the following in relation to the AFP's engagement with the Torres Strait.

The Pacific Transnational Crime Network (PTCN) is an Australian Government initiative which provides a proactive, transnational criminal intelligence and investigative capability to Pacific region law enforcement agencies. It is a law enforcement network that includes police, customs, and immigration officers, and comprises Transnational Crime Units (TCUs) in Fiji (Suva & Nadi), Samoa, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea (PNG).

In April 2008, a regional Micronesia Transnational Crime Unit (M-TCU) was established in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). The M-TCU is a partnership arrangement between the AFP, FSM National Police, and the US Department of Defence Joint Interagency Task Force West. In addition, 'mini-TCUs' have been established in Palau, Marshall Islands, Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, and Kiribati. These 'mini TCUs' feed intelligence to the M-TCU or the Pacific Transnational Crime Coordination Centre in Samoa.

The PNG TCU is a key facilitator of matters pertaining to transnational crime in the region, in particular the Torres Strait.

The PNG / Australia Trans National Crime Conference (TNCC) is a key forum for ongoing dialogue between border protection and law enforcement agencies responsible for the Torres Strait and Far North Queensland.

A number of significant operational outcomes have been realised in the last 12 months that have a direct correlation to the outcomes of dialogue and cross border engagement between Australian and PNG agencies since the last TNCC.

The recent TNCC highlighted difficulties with the enforcement of Immigration law. In particular, there are obvious issues pursuing crime groups and individuals across the PNG / Australian maritime border as a result of the freedom of movement provisions contained within the Torres Strait Treaty (traditional visits).

An increase in intelligence product from the region is enabling the strategic targeting of transnational criminals by identifying the extent of narcotics trafficking and illegal cross border movements, however the current Treaty Border Pass system is easily manipulated. The AFP and the PNG TCU strongly recommended the addition of photo identification and biographical details of the traveller to the traditional border crossing requirement. The addition of these details will assist law enforcement identify transnational criminals and provide added structure to crossing privileges.

Yours faithfully



Kevin Zuccato  
Assistant Commissioner  
National Manager Border & International